

Health IT will help disease registries, officials say

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The prospect of obtaining disease registries from electronic health records is an enticing one, two speakers at a health technology conference said today.

Dr. Carolyn Clancy, director of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), cited creation of disease registries from EHRs as one of the ways health information technology can expand medical knowledge.

AHRQ is sponsoring development of a Web-based guide to creating, maintaining and using registries, which are lists of patients with a particular disease or condition. The lists help researchers spot trends, evaluate treatments and monitor care of patients.

A draft of the guide is available [here](#) for comment until Nov. 27.

Dr. Arthur Davidson, director of the Denver Center for Public Health Preparedness, seconded Clancy's remarks. Registry development is difficult now because it is not part of the daily routine of treating patients, Davidson said.

Once EHRs are widespread, he said, the technology will permit registries to be created as needed and on the fly.

"To me, this is an entirely new way of looking at the way we do business," Davidson said.

He and Clancy spoke at the World Healthcare Innovation and Technology Congress in Washington, D.C.

Clancy also announced that AHRQ, an arm of the Department of Health and Human Services, will be announcing \$24 million in funding for health IT projects in the next week or so.

One area where AHRQ wishes to fund projects is transitions of care, where patients are transferred from one institution or care setting to another. It's an area "where we drop the ball far too often," Clancy said.